

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A needle assembly, comprising:

a needle cannula having a proximal end and a distal end with a puncture tip;

a hub comprising an elongated tubular body having an outer surface, a proximal end, a distal end and a passageway extending through said hub, said distal end of said hub supporting said needle cannula, said hub further comprising a first tab extending outwardly from said proximal end of said tubular body; and

a hollow outer shield comprising a housing having a proximal end, a distal end, a passageway extending from said proximal end to said distal end, and a second tab extending outwardly from said housing, said outer shield co-axially surrounding said distal end of said tubular body of said hub and including an inner surface in cooperating engagement with said outer surface of said tubular body of said hub, said outer shield movable between a retracted position in which said first tab extending from said tubular body is exposed from said proximal end of said outer shield and said puncture tip of said needle cannula is exposed from said distal end of said shield, and an extended position in which said outer shield covers said puncture tip of said needle cannula;

wherein said first tab and said second tab are configured such that opposing forces applied against said first tab and said second tab cause said outer shield to move toward said distal end of said needle cannula from said retracted position to said extended position.

2. A needle assembly as in claim 1, wherein said first tab extends from a bottom portion of said hub and said second tab extends from a top portion of said housing of said outer shield.

3. A needle assembly as in claim 1, wherein said outer shield includes a pair of wing members extending laterally from opposing sides of said housing.

4. A needle assembly as in claim 1, wherein said outer surface of said hub includes a series of grooves and ramps and said inner surface of said outer shield cooperates with said outer surface of said hub, said grooves and ramps providing frictional engagement between said outer shield and said hub.

5. A needle assembly as in claim 4, wherein said housing of said outer shield includes at least one cutaway portion extending through said housing and defining a flexible finger, said at least one flexible finger adapted for outwardly flexing during movement of said outer shield from said retracted position to said extended position.

6. A needle assembly as in claim 1, wherein said proximal end of said hub is adapted for connection to a flexible tube of a blood collection set.

7. A needle assembly as in claim 1, wherein said first and said second tabs include protrusions for frictional engagement with a user's finger and thumb, respectively.

8. A shieldable blood collection set comprising:

a fixture for connecting the blood collection set to a receptacle;

a flexible tube having opposed first and second ends, said first end of said flexible tube being connected to said fixture;

a hub including an elongated tubular body having an outer surface, a proximal end, a distal end and a passageway extending through said hub, said proximal end of said hub mounted to said second end of said flexible tube, said hub further including a first tab extending outwardly from said tubular body at said proximal end of said hub for engagement with a user's finger;

a needle cannula extending from said distal end of said hub, said needle cannula including a proximal end and a distal end having a puncture tip; and

a hollow outer shield comprising a housing having a proximal end, a distal end and a passageway extending therethrough, said outer shield co-axially surrounding said distal end of said tubular body of said hub such that said first tab of said hub is exposed from said proximal end of said outer shield, said outer shield adapted for movement between a retracted position in which said puncture tip of said needle cannula is exposed from said distal end of said shield, and an extended position in which said outer shield covers said puncture tip of said needle cannula, said housing of said outer shield having an inner surface in cooperating engagement with said outer surface of said hub and a second tab extending outwardly from said housing for engagement with a user's thumb;

wherein said first tab and said second tab are configured such that opposing forces applied against said first tab and said second tab cause said outer shield to move toward

said distal end of said needle cannula from said retracted position to said extended position.

9. A blood collection set as in claim 8, wherein said first tab includes a ramped surface extending outwardly from said tubular body of said hub at said proximal end of said hub in a direction toward said flexible tube.

10. A blood collection set as in claim 8, wherein said second tab includes a ramped surface extending outwardly from said housing of said outer shield at said proximal end of said outer shield in a direction toward said distal end of said outer shield.

11. A blood collection set as in claim 8, wherein at least one of said first tab and said second tab includes protrusions on a surface of said tab for providing a frictional engagement with a user.

12. A blood collection set as in claim 8, wherein said first tab extends from a bottom portion of said hub and said second tab extends from a top portion of said housing of said outer shield.

13. A blood collection set as in claim 8, wherein said outer shield includes a pair of wing members extending laterally from opposing sides of said housing.

14. A blood collection set as in claim 8, wherein said outer surface of said hub includes a series of grooves and ramps and said inner surface of said outer shield cooperates with said outer surface of said hub, said grooves and ramps providing frictional engagement between said outer shield and said hub.

15. A blood collection set as in claim 14, wherein said housing of said outer shield includes at least one cutaway portion extending through said housing and defining a flexible finger, said at least one flexible finger adapted for outwardly flexing during movement of said outer shield from said retracted position to said extended position.